

Singapore's youth upbeat, survey shows

They believe there are ample opportunities to achieve their goals

By THAM YUEN-C & DARYL CHIN

A key reason is their belief that there are ample opportunities to achieve their goals, with more than 90 per cent of the respondents feeling this way.

Those with demanding but supportive parents were more satisfied and confident in their own future, the survey found.

Differentiating such parents from the very hands-on "tiger mums" recently highlighted in the news, Professor Ho Kong Chong, vice-dean of research at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and one of the book's co-authors, said the crucial difference may lie in the degree in which parents back up their kids' endeavours.

The strong correlation between family support and well-being also made young people more family-oriented. Despite busy schedules, they were spending more time with their loved ones compared to five years ago.

Some 40 per cent of those surveyed said they spend more than 10 hours a week with their parents, compared to 25 per cent in 2005. Take the case of Bobby Lee, 23, an undergraduate at NUS, who gives the thumbs up to family time. "The more I live, the more I realise I have more to learn from my parents. And it's also to show my gratitude to them for raising me."

Their traditional views also extended to marriage, with more than 83 per cent

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A nationwide survey* has found young people...

**OH, TO BE
YOUNG &
HAPPY**

■ ARE A HAPPY, SATISFIED BUNCH

On a 1 to 7 happiness scale

Race	Happiness
Chinese	5.4
Malay	5.6
Indian	5.7
Others	5.7
Overall	5.5

On a 1 to 10 life satisfaction scale

Race	Life satisfaction
Chinese	7.6
Malay	7.7
Indian	8
Others	8
Overall	7.7

■ SEEK THESE LIFE GOALS

Maintain strong family ties	72%
Have a successful career	65%
Acquire new skills and knowledge	60%
Earn a lot of money	43%

NOTE: Responses are from the 20-24 age group. The other age groups had similar figures.

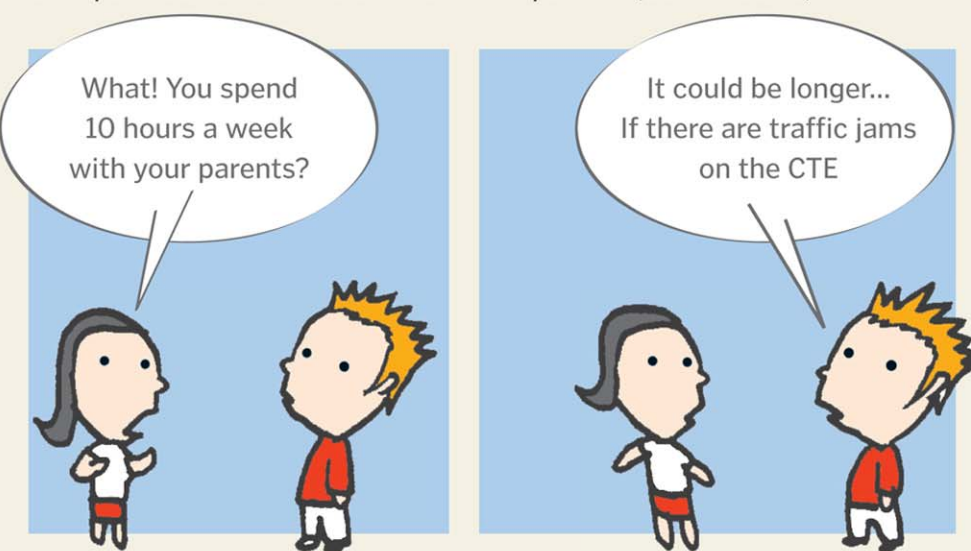
■ ARE PATRIOTIC

95%

are proud to be Singaporean (93% in 2005)

■ LIKE SPENDING TIME WITH FAMILY

40% spend 10 hours or more a week with parents (25% in 2005)



■ LIKE TO BE CHALLENGED BY PARENTS

Youths are happiest to have parents who challenge them to be independent, but who also provide support when needed.

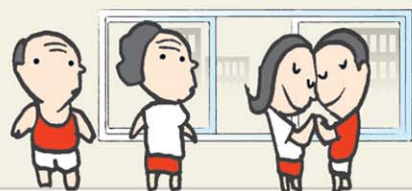
■ HAVE FRIENDS OF OTHER RACES

67% say they have close friends of a different race, religion or nationality. (68% in 2005)

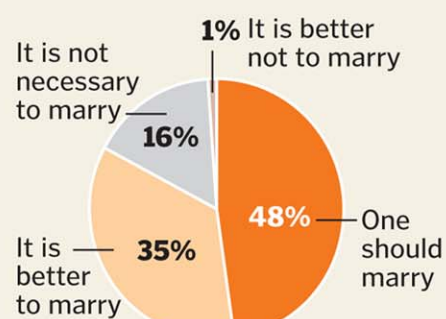


■ LOVE FAMILY VERY MUCH

43% are married but living with parents (23% in 2005)



■ BELIEVE IN MARRIAGE



■ BELIEVE OPPORTUNITIES ARE PLENTIFUL

91% say there are enough opportunities in Singapore to achieve their life goals

NOTE: * A National Youth Council survey last year of 1,268 Singapore youths aged 15 to 34.

Young people a pragmatic lot



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indicating they believed in it.

The survey also debunked the image of the young idealist and found that young people are largely pragmatic. Across all age groups, those surveyed said their top four life goals were strong family relationships, successful careers, acquiring new skills and knowledge, and earning lots of money.

But Dr Ho Kong Weng, who wrote the chapter on the well-being of youth, cautioned that “the pursuit of success and money might not bring real well-being”.

He is an assistant professor at Nanyang Technological Universi-

ty's School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Young people here have also become more vocal, thanks in part to the Internet. Half of those surveyed had expressed views on matters of public and global concern, compared to 24 per cent in 2005. Most of this was done online on blogs, forums and social networking sites.

Cyberspace also allowed them to be more actively involved with interest groups and welfare organisations.

But with much of the interaction done online, there were fewer opportunities to take on leadership roles such as being the captain of a football team or a student counsellor.

The percentage involved in leadership fell to 11 per cent from 22 per cent in 2005.

Commenting on the findings, Mr Koh Peng Keng, director of the NYC, said: “However the youths are doing...you always think that youths can do better. But if you look at even just academic achievement alone, youths are already doing a lot better than before.”

Echoing that view is Mr Low Eng Teong, principal of Victoria School, who was at the book's launch: “We have to give more credit to our young people.”

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